

Message Text

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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BONN 13756

E.O. 11652: 6DS

TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, WB, GW, GE, BU, CZ, HU, PL, UR

SUBJECT: FRG-SOVIET RELATIONS: SCHEEL-GROMYKO TALKS
IN NEW YORK

REF: BONN 13681

1. SUMMARY. DURING SCHEEL-GROMYKO MEETING IN NEW YORK
SEPTEMBER 19, SCHEEL ACCEPTED HIS SOVIET COLLEAGUE'S
INVITATION TO VISIT MOSCOW SOMETIME BETWEEN OCTOBER 30
AND NOVEMBER 5. AT GROMYKO'S INITIATIVE, THE TWO
FONMINS DISCUSSED CURRENT PROBLEMS CONCERNING BERLIN.
GROMYKO CHARGED THAT THE FRG'S EFFORT TO PROVIDE LEGAL
ASSISTANCE FOR WEST BERLIN WAS IN VIOLATION OF THE
BERLIN AGREEMENT AND INVOLVED A MATTER OF STATUS. THE
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TWO FONMINS AGREED TO HAVE THEIR EXPERTS EXPLORE THE

VARIOUS PROBLEM AREAS CONCERNING BERLIN PRIOR TO SCHEEL'S MOSCOW VISIT. SOME BUT NOT ALL FRG FONOFF REPS IN BONN ARE GUARDEDLY OPTIMISTIC THAT THE VISIT MAY BRING SOME MELLOWING IN THE SOVIET POSITION. THEIR GENERAL EVALUATION OF THE CURRENT STATE OF FRG-USSR RELATIONS IS GENERALLY POSITIVE. END SUMMARY

2. AT SEPTEMBER 21 BONN GROUP MEETING, FRG REP REPORTED ON 90-MINUTE SCHEEL-GROMYKO MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 19 AT SOVIET MISSION IN NEW YORK. THE TALKS REPORTEDLY COVERED VARIOUS BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL MATTERS, BUT CONCERNED PRIMARILY SCHEEL'S VISIT TO MOSCOW AND BERLIN PROBLEMS. GROMYKO PROPOSED THAT SCHEEL TAKE UP THE EARLIER SOVIET INVITATION TO VISIT MOSCOW, SUGGESTING THE VISIT TAKE PLACE BETWEEN OCTOBER 30 AND NOVEMBER 5. SCHEEL AGREED.

3. GROMYKO TURNED TO THE PROBLEMS CONCERNING WEST BERLIN. HE NOTED THAT HE AND BREZHNEV HAD ALREADY DISCUSSED THIS TOPIC WITH THEIR WEST GERMAN HOSTS IN BONN IN MAY. THE USSR WAS AWARE THAT CERTAIN OFFICIAL FRG BODIES WERE TRYING TO CIRCUMVENT THE BERLIN AGREEMENT, PERHAPS ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE USSR AND GDR WOULD NOT NOTICE THESE EFFORTS. EXAMPLES OF THESE FRG ACTIVITIES INCLUDED THE ATTEMPT TO SET UP A FEDERAL AGENCY FOR ENVIRONMENT IN WEST BERLIN AND THE PRESSURE TO HAVE SOME EAST EUROPEAN STATES ACCEPT THE FRG'S PROVISION OF LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR WEST BERLIN. GROMYKO SAID THAT EVERYTHING OUGHT TO GO WELL FOR WEST BERLINERS ON THE BASIS OF THE BERLIN AGREEMENT AND THE USSR DID NOT WANT TO RAISE ANY ARTIFICIAL PROBLEMS. QUESTIONS WERE BEING ASKED IN THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND POLITBURO, HOWEVER, AS TO WHY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WAS ACTING IN THIS DIFFICULT MANNER.

4. SCHEEL REPLIED THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT VIEWED THE MATTER QUITE DIFFERENTLY. HE REFERRED TO THE FRG-SOVIET DECLARATION OF LAST MAY CONCERNING THE STRICT OBSERVANCE AND FULL APPLICATION OF THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT. IN THE FRG, THERE WAS A STRONG SUSPICION
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THAT THE SOVIET UNION WAS ENDEAVORING TO INTERPRET THE AGREEMENT AS RESTRICTIVELY AS POSSIBLE. FOR EXAMPLE, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCY IN WEST BERLIN WAS NOT CONTRARY TO THE AGREEMENT. ONE COULD NOT IMAGINE A MORE PEACEFUL ACTIVITY THAN THE ONE THE AGENCY WAS DESIGNED TO PERFORM. AS FAR AS CONSULAR SERVICES WERE CONCERNED, IT WAS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S VIEW THAT THESE ENCOMPASSED WEST BERLIN REQUESTS FOR LEGAL

ASSISTANCE. THIS MATTER DID NOT TOUCH UPON ANY QUESTION OF STATUS FOR WEST BERLIN.

5. GROMYKO RESPONDED THAT THIS WAS PRECISELY THE ISSUE. IT WAS THE SOVIET VIEW THAT THE STATUS OF WEST BERLIN WAS INVOLVED IN THIS MATTER. THE USSR CONSIDERED THAT WEST BERLIN WAS NOT PART OF AND WAS NOT TO BE "ADMINISTERED" BY THE FRG.

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6. THE TWO FONMINS CAME NO NEARER TO RESOLVING THE DIFFERENCE IN VIEWS. THEY AGREED, HOWEVER, THAT PRIOR

TO SCHEEL'S VISIT TO MOSCOW, THE WORKING LEVELS AT THEIR MINISTRIES SHOULD MEET (EITHER IN BONN OR MOSCOW) TO REVIEW ALL QUESTIONS CONCERNING BERLIN WHICH WERE CAUSING PROBLEMS BETWEEN THE FRG AND USSR.

7. IN SUBSEQUENT BONN GROUP DISCUSSION, THE UK REP NOTED THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME THE USSR HAD ASSERTED THAT THE LEGAL ASSISTANCE ISSUE INVOLVED A MATTER OF STATUS OF WEST BERLIN. HE THOUGHT THAT IF THE SOVIETS HELD TO THIS VIEW, THERE SEEMED TO BE LITTLE ROOM FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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MANEUVER.

8. EMBOFF DISCUSSED THE SCHEEL-GROMYKO MEETING AND THE GENERAL STATE OF FRG-USSR RELATIONS WITH FRG FONOFF SOVIET DESK CHIEF SEPTEMBER 20. LATTER WAS QUITE PHILOSOPHICAL ABOUT PRESENT STRAIN OVER WEST BERLIN. HE SAID THE FRG HAD NEVER EXPECTED BREZHNEV VISIT TO BONN TO SOLVE ALL QUESTIONS. HE CONCEDED RUEFULLY THAT THE LEGAL ASSISTANCE PROBLEM HAD GOTTEN OUT OF HAND AND BECOME A PROBLEM OF PRESTIGE FOR BOTH SIDES. NEVERTHELESS, HE WAS HOPEFUL THAT THE EXPERT LEVEL MEETINGS AND SUBSEQUENT SCHEEL VISIT TO MOSCOW MIGHT RESULT IN ENOUGH PROGRESS TO MEET BOTH SIDES' NEEDS.

9. FONOFF STATE SECRETARY FRANK, HOWEVER, IN SEPTEMBER 21 MEETING WITH THREE ALLIED AMBASSADORS (BONN 13739 - NOTAL) WAS NOT SANGUINE ABOUT PROSPECTS OF THE LEGAL ASSISTANCE ISSUE'S EARLY SETTLEMENT. HE THOUGHT THE GDR WAS BEHIND THE STIFF SOVIET/EE POSITION AND DID NOT BELIEVE THE SOVIETS WERE WILLING TO TRY TO TURN THE GDR AROUND AT THIS POINT. FRANK WAS ALSO CONCERNED OVER GROMYKO'S USE OF THE WORD "ADMINISTERED" RATHER THAN "GOVERNED" (PER PARA 5 ABOVE). HE THOUGHT THAT IF THE SOVIETS INTENDED TO MAKE DIFFICULTIES OVER EVERY FRG ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITY IN WEST BERLIN, THEN THEIR SCOPE FOR TROUBLE-MAKING WOULD BE ENORMOUS.

10. ON THE MORE GENERAL STATE OF FRG-USSR RELATIONS, THE SOVIET DESK CHIEF WAS FAIRLY RELAXED. HE SAID THAT HE SIMPLY LAUGHED AT PRESS REPORTS THAT THE SOVIETS WERE UNHAPPY OVER THE SLOW PACE OF FRG-SOVIET ECONOMIC AND TRADE TIES: THE FACT WAS THAT TRADE IN BOTH DIRECTIONS HAD INCREASED ALMOST 38 PERCENT IN THE FIRST HALF OF 1973 COMPARED WITH THE SAME PERIOD IN 1972. HE NOTED FURTHER THAT BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS WERE PROCEEDING APACE, SOME MORE QUICKLY THAN OTHERS ADMITTEDLY, IN VARIOUS TECHNICAL FIELDS. HIGH-LEVEL VISITS WERE CONTINUING, WITH A BUNDESTAG DELEGATION (INCLUDING SPD

IDEOLOGUE HERBERT WEHNER) GOING TO THE USSR NEXT WEEK,
AND DEPUTY PREMIER NOVIKOV DUE IN BONN IN MID-NOVEMBER.

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11. OUR FONOFF SOURCE THEREFORE CONSIDERED THAT THINGS
WERE PROGRESSING JUST ABOUT AS EXPECTED, WITH BERLIN
ISSUES CONTINUING TO OCCUPY BOTH SIDES' TIME AND
ATTENTION BUT NOT COMPLETELY BLOCKING ANY DEVELOPMENT
OF RELATIONS. HE SAID THAT, PRIVATELY, THE SOVIETS
HAD EVEN INDICATED UNDERSTANDING FOR THE DOMESTIC
POLITICAL PRESSURES BEHIND THE CHANCELLOR'S CRITICISM
OF THE DIFFICULTIES BEING EXPERIENCED BY SOVIET
DISSIDENTS IN THE USSR (BONN 12985).

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12. THE FONOFF REP SAID THAT, IN HIS VIEW, THE RECENT PRESS REPORTS CONCERNING STRESSES WITHIN THE KREMLIN OVER SOVIET DETENTE AND DOMESTIC POLICIES WERE OVERDRAWN. HE THOUGHT THERE HAD BEEN SOME SERIOUS DEBATE OVER EAST-WEST RELATIONS EARLIER IN THE YEAR BUT BELIEVED THAT BREZHNEV HAD COME OUT A CLEAR WINNER AND EVEN MORE SELF-ASSURED THAN BEFORE. HE CONSIDERED BREZHNEV'S POSITION STRONG, ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT EXCLUDE SOME CHANGES IN THE POLITBURO: THESE COULD BE RELATED TO THE DOMESTIC SITUATION, PARTICULARLY THE DISSIDENTS, OVER WHOM OUR SOURCE THOUGHT THERE CONTINUED TO BE SOME DEBATE IN TOP SOVIET COUNCILS. EVEN HERE, HOWEVER, HE
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THOUGHT THE PRO-DETENTE GROUP WAS WINNING OUT. HE FELT THAT THIS GROUP HAD ARGUED, SUCCESSFULLY, FOR ALLOWING THE DISSIDENTS TO SPEAK OUT LOUDLY AND CRITICALLY ENOUGH TO PROVOKE NEGATIVE REACTIONS AMONG OTHER SOVIET INTELLECTUALS (E.G. SIMONOV AND SHOSTAKOVICH) AND IN THE POPULATION GENERALLY. OUR CONTACT THOUGHT THIS REACTION WAS NOW TAKING PLACE AND MIGHT WELL SERVE TO MUFFLE THE DISSENTERS' VOICES MORE EFFECTIVELY THAN ANY HEAVY-HANDED KGB ACTIONS.

13. COMMENT: WE TEND TO SHARE FRANK'S ASSESSMENT THAT SCHEEL'S VISIT WILL PROBABLY NOT BRING A QUICK END TO THE DIFFICULTIES OVER THE LEGAL ASSISTANCE ISSUE. THE PROBLEM HAS BECOME PUBLICIZED, BOTH IN EAST AND WEST, AND THUS IS NOW ONE OF PRINCIPLE, AND HENCE LESS EASY TO SOLVE THROUGH COMPROMISE SOLUTIONS. EVEN IF IT IS SOLVED, THE FONOFF NOW SEEMS TO REALIZE THAT THERE WILL BE OTHER DIFFICULTIES OVER BERLIN IN THE FUTURE, AND THAT THESE ARE GOING TO REQUIRE A FIRM FRG STANCE WHICH WILL OCCASIONALLY BRING PROBLEMS FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S RELATIONS WITH THE USSR. NONETHELESS, THE FONOFF VIEW AND ONE WHICH WE SHARE IS THAT, NOTWITHSTANDING UPS-AND-DOWNS OVER BERLIN AND PERHAPS SOME OTHER ISSUES, THE FRG-USSR RELATIONSHIP WILL CONTINUE TO DEVELOP GRADUALLY AND POSITIVELY AS AGREEMENTS IN VARIOUS FIELDS ARE ESTABLISHED AND CONTACTS EXPANDED.
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